

Speaking Notes
For the
Honourable Marco Mendicino
Minister of Public Safety

Emergencies Act

February 15, 2022

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[APG]

Mr. Speaker,

Thank you for the opportunity to rise in debate on this motion from the member for XXXX.

The past three weeks have been trying for many Canadians.

In our capital city, what began as an interruption has become an occupation.

We've seen far too many examples of intimidation, harassment and hate.

Residents have effectively been held hostage in their own city.

And many of them, especially young women and people of colour, feel unsafe.

They have been shouted into their homes by an angry, loud, intolerant and sometimes violent crowd.

Of course, all Members in this House support the right to peaceful protest. It's one of the hallmarks of our democracy.

But peaceful protests don't make people afraid to leave their homes. The Ottawa Police Service has opened over 100 investigations related to the protests. Many more have gone unreported.

We must resist the temptation to dismiss these as isolated incidents.

Nous avons vu des preuves qu'un élément extrémiste coordonné existe au sein des manifestations. La menace pour la sécurité publique est bien réelle, même si elle est tapie sous la surface.

Au cœur de ce mouvement se trouvent la colère, l'animosité et, dans de trop nombreux cas, les armes.

Nous le voyons jouer à nos frontières, devant nos législatures, nos symboles nationaux et dans nos communautés.

Nous devons être lucides quant à sa gravité.

RCMP arrested 13 people in connection with the Coutts border protest after seizing more than a dozen long guns, handguns, ammunition and bulletproof vests. They were carrying white supremacist symbols.

The blockade's coordinators have demonstrated they are an organized, agile, well-informed group driven by an extremist ideology, motivated by a "might makes right" rule.

This is totally contrary to our democratic values.

From the Coutts to the Pacific Highway to the Ambassador Bridge, corridors that support jobs for many were blocked by a few.

While the blockades have been stopped by police and trade is again flowing, we must keep it that way.

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Every day, some \$50 million in trade passes through the Coutts Crossing. At the Ambassador Bridge, it's \$400 million.

It is no exaggeration to say that these illegal blockades have already cost our economy in the billions.

But these aren't just some big numbers. They're jobs for Canadians.

Every Canadian has the right to make our views heard. But we don't have the right to make someone else's life hard.

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And that brings us to why we're here today.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has the obligation to act in times of national emergency.

Since the onset of this situation, we have worked closely with cities and provinces. I have been in constant contact with mayors, premiers and police chiefs.

We have provided extra support whenever we've been asked, including many deployments of RCMP officers, and special resources like public order units. In Ottawa, we have helped establish and integrated Command Centre.

But this isn't enough. More resources isn't the only answer. We must provide better ones.

We need to back law enforcement with the tools they need to do their jobs. And we need to use every tool in our box.

And we are.

That's why we announced on Monday, that after consulting with cabinet, caucus and the Premiers of every province and territory, our government has invoked the Emergencies Act.

Yesterday, I officially tabled the declaration of national emergency in this House.

The Act gives precision, clarity and new authorities to law enforcement – helping them stop blockades and keep essential corridors open.

It will help us to mobilize essential services – like tow trucks—more easily.

It allows the RCMP to act quickly, and to have the backs of provincial and municipal law enforcement.

And it can stop the flow of money – foreign and domestic—giving financial institutions powers to freeze funds.

These measures will be targeted, tactical and temporary.

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Monsieur le Président, il est important de souligner que le fait d'invoquer la Loi sur les mesures d'urgence ne donne pas au gouvernement fédéral le pouvoir de diriger les services de police de toute autre juridiction.

Plus précisément, les mesures en vigueur en vertu de la Loi communiquent clairement des interdictions nouvelles, mais temporaires, pour :

- Les assemblées publiques susceptibles d'affecter la circulation et la sécurité des personnes et des biens, de nuire au commerce ou d'affecter le fonctionnement des infrastructures essentielles.

- Amener des enfants mineurs, âgés de moins de 18 ans, à participer à une assemblée illégale ou à proximité.

En outre, ces mesures s'étendent aux personnes qui soutiendraient ces rassemblements illégaux, et interdisent de :

- De voyager au Canada dans l'intention de participer à ces assemblées illégales, ou de fournir un soutien aux personnes qui y participent.

- Les personnes qui se rendent à des assemblées illégales et en reviennent avec l'intention d'y participer ; et,

- de fournir un soutien, comme de l'équipement et du carburant, à ceux qui participent à des assemblées illégales, ou de demander le soutien d'autres personnes.

Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act is no ordinary law. But we know we are in no ordinary time.

As former Minister Perrin Beatty said when introducing it in 1988, the Emergencies Act *“enables the federal government to fulfill its constitutional responsibility to provide for safety and security of Canadians during national emergencies.”*

Keeping Canadians safe is a responsibility we take very seriously. And it is one we will fulfill.

Thank you. Merci.

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